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ABSTRACT

Most, if not all research on communication apprehension (CA) in Japan has been theory driven. While a theory driven approach may be useful to help understand certain aspects of CA in Japan, a ground-up approach offers the opportunity to understand in depth, the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of those who suffer from CA. This paper reports the results of a focus group where Japanese students were able to talk freely about the impact of apprehension on their daily lives. After categorizing and analyzing the results from a series of focus groups, the impact of communication fear on the everyday lives of the Japanese participants shows that many of them appear to live double lives, one as successes of the Japanese educational system, and also as victims of fear communication. The paper closes with suggestions for future research, including which kind of treatment program or programs is best suited for Japanese populations. Contains 24 references; 2 charts of data are attached. (Author/RS)

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Japanese college students speak about their fear of communication: Thematic analysis through SPSS TextSmart

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Abstract

Most, if not all research on CA in Japan has been theory driven. While a theory driven approach may be useful to help understand certain aspects of CA in Japan, a ground-up approach offers the opportunity to understand in depth, the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of those who suffer from CA. This paper reports the results of a focus group where Japanese students were able to talk freely about the impact of apprehension on their daily lives. After categorizing and analyzing the results from a series of focus groups, the impact of communication fear on the everyday lives of the Japanese participants shows that many of them appear to live double lives, one as successes of the Japanese educational system, and also as victims of fear communication. The paper closes with suggestions for future research, including which kind of treatment program or programs is best suited for Japanese populations.

Japanese College Students Speak About Their Fear of Communication: Thematic Analysis Through SPSS TextSmart

Although communication apprehension (CA) is the most studied concept in the field of communication (Beatty, 1994), the vast majority of studies on this concept have been conducted in the United States. As Klopf (1997) asserted "studying CA seems to be a U.S. enterprise" (p. 269). CA research in other countries is still in its infancy. Researchers who investigate CA in other countries must proceed cautiously because thoughts, values, and beliefs associated with communication vary across cultures. Slowing the process even further, researchers must test the cross-cultural equivalence of instrumentation developed in the United States before administering questionnaires in other countries. In particular, researchers must examine the equivalence of both the concepts and contexts that comprise the questionnaire (Keaten, Sakamoto, & Pribyl, 1998).

The purpose of the present paper is to build upon a developing body of CA literature in Japan. Reported in this manuscript is a study of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with communication held by Japanese college students.

Review of Literature

In the late 70s, researchers conducted initial CA research in Japan, comparing U.S. college students to Japanese students and found that Japanese college students have higher scores on the PRCA-24 than U.S. college students (Klopf, Cambra, & Ishii, 1981). Other researchers have discovered similar results (McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1985; Nishida, 1988).

Keaten, Kelly, & Pribyl (1997) studied the reports of communication apprehension of Japanese students from kindergarten to twelfth grade using the Personal Report of Communication Fear (McCroskey, 1981). Results indicated that Japanese students reported strikingly similar levels of communication apprehension when compared to United States students in the same grade levels. Factor analysis of the instrument also revealed a three dimensional structure to the PRCF as contrasted to the unidimensional one found in the United States. Keaten et al. (1997) interpreted the three dimensions as (1) general communication

fear, (2) classroom communication fear, and (3) fear of communicating with strangers. An examination of the pattern of means by grade level showed a steady increase in the classroom dimension for the Japanese students.

To address the inconsistent findings found using the PRCA-24 and the PRCF, Pribyl, Keaten, Sakamoto, & Koshikawa (1998) examined the validity of the PRCA-24 when administered to Japanese subjects. They found that the dimensional structure of the PRCA-24 was not equivalent cross-culturally. In particular, results suggested that participants did not perceive the group and meeting dimensions of the PRCA-24 as distinct (Pribyl et al., 1998, p. 51). The validity of the PRCA-24 in Japan, therefore, was considered questionable. Levine and McCroskey (1990) also addressed the potential lack of cross-cultural validity of the PRCA-24 by stating "It is quite possible that the CA construct and measure cannot be translated into the language and culture of some other groups around the world." (p. 71)

A team of researchers from Japan and the United States developed an instrument to measure communication fear that was built upon the social structure of interaction in Japanese. The Japanese Communication Fear Scale (JCFS) consists of four dimensions identified as pivotal to interaction within Japanese culture: (1) familiarity, (2) status, (3) number of receivers, and (4) context. Research data support the internal consistency, predictive validity, construct validity, and convergent validity of the JCFS when administered to Japanese college students (Keaten, Sakamoto, & Pribyl, 1995; Sakamoto, Keaten, & Pribyl 1996; Sakamoto, Pribyl, & Keaten, 1997).

Justification

Researchers are faced with one of two choices for studying communication within a culture. When an "emic" approach is taken, researchers study the interaction within a given culture from the perspective of members of the culture. The structure of interaction is *discovered* by the researcher rather than created by the researcher (Berry, 1980). Researchers using an "etic" approach study culture by comparing cultures on predetermined characteristics, such as the items that compose a self-report questionnaire. With an etic approach,

interpretation of behavior is not grounded within the system of culture. Instead, interpretations are based upon criteria that are considered universal and absolute (Berry, 1980).

CA research in countries other than the U.S. has employed an etic approach. Researchers have imposed a set of criteria related to CA that were assumed universal and absolute. In particular, instrumentation has provided the criteria by which CA is measured, which limits the nature and scope of the research findings. For example, the PRCA-24 posits that four communication contexts (dyad, group, meetings, public) represent the spectrum of communication contexts within a culture. The JCFS assumes that four dimensions (familiarity, status, number of receivers, context) represent the critical aspects of interaction in Japan. The structure inherent in these questionnaires were created by researchers based upon theory rather than discovered through analysis of research data.

To honor the potential uniqueness of interaction within Japanese culture, an emic approach must be taken to study the thoughts, feelings, and perceived behaviors of individuals who suffer from anxiety while communicating. The following research question framed the study:

RQ1 How do members of the Japanese culture who experience fear when interacting describe thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with interaction?

Method

Focus Group Design

Focus groups were used to foster a climate whereby individuals who suffer from communication fear would openly discuss their perceptions. A focus group is superior to individual interviews in this case because "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan, 1988, p. 12).

Focus groups also can increase feelings of security especially when participants view themselves as homogeneous on the variable of study. When focus group participants perceive themselves as similar a feeling of security is fostered, creating "the freedom to discuss thoughts, feelings, and behaviors candidly" (Lederman, 1990, p. 118). Moreover, focus

group research in the United States has been successful in discovering important insights into the plight of the highly apprehensive individual (Lederman, 1983; Garera Izquierdo, Douglas, & Wartman, 1994).

Participants

The JCFS-40 was distributed to 292 students in an introductory psychological class in the Faculty of Letters at a top private university in Tokyo. The entrance requirements for the college are extremely rigorous. The college has a relatively long history, attracting top students from all areas of Japan. Graduates from this college go on to be leaders in their fields. Responses to the JCFS were imputed into SPSS 6.1 for Macintosh and then checked for accuracy. Reliability of the JCFS for this sample was α .94, M = 60.1 (SD = 10.53).

Instrumentation

For the purposes of selection, the operational definition of fearful was a JCFS-40 score that was one or more standard deviation units above the mean (JCFS > 70). The original JCFS (Japanese Communication Fear Scale) has been shown in previous research to be high in reliability and validity (Sakamoto, Keaten, & Pribyl 1996; Sakamoto, Pribyl, & Keaten, 1997). The difference between the two instruments is in the number of questions and dimensions. The original JCFS has 72 questions (sixteen situations in three contexts in school, and twelve out-of-school situations in two contexts), but the JCFS-40 was reduced in size to 40 questions (24 questions in an in-school context, 16 questions in out-of-school context). Dimension and question elimination was done through factor analysis and item-total correlation procedures that confirmed that the deletion of the 32 questions did not sacrifice the scale's reliability or validity.

Procedures

A list of potential participants was generated. Students were contacted by telephone by a psychology department assistant, and were told the following:

(1) We are gathering a group of students to come and discuss communication;

(2) There will be no deception in this research;

(3) Students selected have similar attitudes to yours;

(4) Your participation in the study will help others to improve their communication;

(5) Your responses will be strictly confidential;

(6) You will be given a small honorarium for participating;

(7) It will take approximately two hours in total;

(8) The voices will be recorded in order to develop a transcript; however, the transcript will refer to participants by number and not by name;

(9) A debriefing session will follow the discussion where you will have a chance to ask questions about the project;

(10) Because your participation will help others improve their communication, we kindly request your cooperation with this project.

Of the 41 students, 29 agreed to join the research as paid participants. Each student's schedule was recorded on a chart, and students were put into four groups according to their availability. These students were again contacted, their willingness to participate confirmed, and were told where to meet. In total, 2 males and 21 females were chosen for a total of 23 participants, divided into four focus groups. The remaining students were not included as participants in the study because of scheduling conflicts.

The focus groups were held one week after the students were contacted. Focus groups were conducted in a meeting room on the school's campus. While one student was late, all of participants came to the focus group. The meeting room was approximately 12' by 18', and four meeting tables were placed in a rectangle on the center of the room. The moderator, a Japanese psychology instructor, sat at the table on the far side of the room with his back to the window. One Aiwa and one Sony digital MD Recorder, connected to a Sony digital microphone and an Aiwa analog microphone, were placed at opposite ends of the table. Two machines were used to ensure all voices would be picked up, and to ensure an accurate recording in case of equipment failure.

Focus Group Content

Twelve semi-structured questions were chosen from a list compiled from the literature, in particular on the focus group research conducted by Lederman, 1983. The questions were as follows:

1 How do you feel when you are communicating?

2 In what situations do you feel apprehensive?

3 Are there topics that you find difficult to talk about?

4 Have your feelings toward communication changed over time?

5 How do you feel when you don't have to talk (in a certain situations or places)?

6 Does something negative happen to you as a result of your apprehension?

7 What techniques do you use to communicate?

8 What kind of thoughts do you have about yourself when you are communicating?

9 How do you think others perceive you when you are communicating?

10 How do you feel when you are the object of attention and are evaluated?

11 What kind of communication happens in your family?

12 Do you feel that the questionnaire accurately assessed your feelings toward communication?

To assure anonymity, students were assigned letters by which they were identified, for example A-san, B-san etc. For analysis, students in the first group were assigned the number 1, 2 in the second group, up to 4. Thus student A in group one was called A1, second student in group 2 B2, etc. Answers were solicited on a one-by-one basis with a rotating starting point. In other words, Student A answered the first question first, Student E (or F, depending on the number of participants of the group) answered the second question second, until all of the questions were finished. Students were allowed to answer freely, however, follow-up questions and probes were used when necessary, for example when a student answered the question incompletely. Each focus group was approximately one hour in length.

Text Preparation

Two research assistants transcribed the digital disks. The transcription was cross-checked at regular intervals to ensure accuracy. The transcript was then translated into English so it could be analyzed in SPSS TextSmart software. The transcript was translated by an American bilingual over a two-week period, and was checked for accuracy by having the

focus group moderator read both transcripts. The check revealed minor problems, all of which were corrected. The data was then formatted for analysis in TextSmart 1.0. TextSmart requires that the data be in the following format:

Question ID <tab>Question Text

. . .Etc.

Case ID <tab>Question ID <tab>Response Text

. . .Etc.

Description of TextSmart

TextSmart is a product of SPSS. The software was designed to analyze and uncover themes in large amounts of verbatim text. TextSmart analyzes the data by using *clustering* and *term frequency*, developing categories that represent the major themes that run through the data.

Clustering.

Clustering is a three-step process. A matrix of similarities is run using all words. Verb forms are treated as a single word, as well as are words that the user chooses to have treated as the same, such as fear and apprehension. This is called an alias. TextSmart then creates a co-occurrence chart for all pairs of words (and aliases) which appear in the response text for that question. A contingency table is then made for all responses. From the contingency table, a binary measure, the Jaccard similarity measure, is computed for each pair of terms, which is the number of co-occurrences between the two terms divided by the sum of co-occurrences plus non-co-occurrences (SPSS, p. 46). The result is a matrix of similarities that represent distances between the words (and aliases).

The matrix is then clustered hierarchically with a cluster representing groups of words (and aliases) with the least amount of distance between them. The clustering process is "a variant of hierarchical clustering with maximum distance amalgamation" (SPSS, p. 46).

The clusters are then scaled in two dimensions using multidimensional scaling (MDS), which is analogous to displaying the round earth on a flat map. This completes the clustering process.

Term Frequency.

Term Frequency is the counting of all terms and their ranking in order of frequency. However, the inclusion of words is not based on raw frequency but instead on frequency of occurrence between cases; thus the word "fear" will be counted once for the case in which it is used twelve times, and also for the case in which it is used a single time. After this procedure, categories are made from the clusters and terms

Categorization.

Categories can be based on *clustering*, *term frequency*, or on both *clustering and term frequency*. *Categories based on clusters* are simply clusters which have the highest number of terms contained within them. Thus if the program is set to return six categories, it will display the first six clusters, or will stop if there are less than six clusters. Leftover terms are ignored. *Categories based on term frequency* will return results that show clusters with the highest number of terms. *Categories based on clustering and term frequency* will return categories which have the highest number of responses of either or both of the methods. As there are an infinite combination of words and clusters depending on the vocabulary which appear in the text and words which can be manually excluded or aliased, SPSS advises TextSmart users to use their final judgement in drawing conclusions because

> the co-occurrence of a pair of words does not *necessarily* indicate a meaningful relationship exists between them. In the final analysis, you should pay more attention to the *meanings* of the terms than to the sizes and shapes of the colored regions [of the MDS] in deciding how to further categorize the terms. (p. 51) [italics original]

Further, analysis revealed that several of the categories included a couple of negative responses that were coded as positive. For example, the sentence "Speaking is an activity that I prefer staying away from" is not negative in the sense that the word "no" or "not" does not appear. Yet, the phrase indicates that the person does not like to speak. SPSS notes that TextSmart does not have the capability to always determine if a response is negative. The

negative responses, which were beset by this problem, were recoded and their associated categories were recalculated.

Results

While extremely helpful in determining the textual patterns (clusters and categories) within verbatim text, TextSmart by itself is unable to determine feeling, tense, or overall patterns that develop within an answer of series of answers. As such, the role of TextSmart in this research was to help elucidate the overall patterns and key words within the responses to an answer. The task of determining the theme represented by the key words was left to the authors of this paper. For each theme, the original text was read by the authors to determine: (1) If the text supports the categories identified by TextSmart, (2) If the overall theme for each of the TextSmart categories, and (3) to determine if the categories (not the answers themselves) were mutually exclusive.

Further, several themes defined as exclusive by TextSmart were, upon further analysis, lexically distinct but theoretically linked. For example, while the difference in meaning between the words known and familiar is a matter of degree and can be separated on that basis, both fall into a category which Japanese communication fear research calls the familiar/unfamiliar distinction. Thus two sets of categories from two questions were collapsed into one.

Next, the overall themes for each category were determined. This was done by reading the original text that was assigned to each category. In all cases except those where there were too few answers to provide clues to the overall meaning, the theme was easily understandable because of the categorizations uncovered by TextSmart. The themes of each of the questions are as follows, and are also given in chart form in Table 1 (Questions 1 through 6) and in Table 2 (Questions 7 through 12).[2]

Question 1 *How do you feel when you are communicating?*

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2 Percentages do not always total 100 because of multiple categorization processing within TextSmart.

The major themes found for this question focused on the familiar/unfamiliar dimension, followed by the status of those who cause fear. Generally speaking, 91% of the respondents remarked that they experience little or no fear if the person they were talking to was known to them. However, 39% of the respondents offered the comment that when they experience fear, the major cause is their seniors and juniors, followed by a college teacher. One example of the comments offered by a participant was this:

> With people I know I can relax and communicate easily, but if it is a stranger or an unknown I become extremely apprehensive.

Question 2 In what situations do you feel communication fear?

Fear is reported to be highest if the interlocutor is unknown; conversely, a known interlocutor produces little fear. The results of Question 2 mirror the results of Question 1 as both categories note that a known other is not a source of fear (34%). When forced to talk however, 26% noted that they will experience higher levels of fear. The same number also report that fear is contingent upon whom they are talking to, while 17% commented on the relationship between place, situation, and fear. One participant noted:

> At the point when I feel that I have to speak I feel a burden has been placed upon me, and I also feel awkward even though I can talk; I try to avoid such situations as much as possible. If it is a situation where I know I do not have to talk I will be comfortable.

Question 3 Are there topics which you find difficult to talk about?

The main theme centered on the difficulty of developing topics and the relationship to interlocutors involved in such situations. Seven respondents, or 30% discussed that rather than talk about a difficult topic, they would listen to the conversation of the other or others. When talking to a friend, 26% offered comments suggesting that there are no topics which are difficult to talk about, or if they knew a mutual topic which they could use (21%). A slightly lower percentage (17%) focused on the idea that silence, or a lack of topics, is a cause of fear. One participant noted difficulties that involved:

> Topics which I do not know anything about. I wonder what happens when topics occur in this area. But I usually speak while feeling apprehensive. I am

> so involved in listening; it is all I can do. If it is someone who is familiar, the topics flow out easily, but if it is someone who is not so well known or who is unknown, I wonder what I should talk about and think as hard as I can as to find something to say, but in the end I do not know what to say, so I usually just go with the flow and listen to the other person.

Question 4 Have your feelings toward communication changed over time?

Many of the students reported that their communication has changed over time. But a few said that their communication has remained stable over time. In particular, Junior high school is where 43% of respondents discussed that communication started to become more difficult for them. For 39% of the participants, communication became difficult in high school, and 34% noted that their communication became worse or was difficult in elementary school. Eight participants (34%) reported that they have no communication problems with their friends. As an example of a change that does happen, consider the following.

> Through elementary school, I was able to communicate well, but for some reason when I got into junior high school, both physically and mentally, I was reading the others' strategies, wondering if they were not thinking such and such. When I started doing this, I stopped talking so much. The thoughts of the others weighed heavily on me.

Question 5 How do you feel when you don't have to talk (in certain situations or places)?

Listening was the dominant theme. More than one third of the respondents reported that they like and enjoy being good listeners, and 17% talked about their positive feelings when being in situations in which they are allowed to remain silent. A slightly lower percentage (13%) report that they experience difficulties in continuing a conversation with a friend, and 13% report that even though they want to have a conversation and join in, fear prevents them from doing so. One participant commented:

> I became a listener. I like listening to others. If I have something to say I will say it but I do not have much to say.

Question 6 Does something negative happen to you as a result of your apprehension?

The themes in question six were mainly centered on the physical manifestations of fear, or concerned feelings of regret toward prior communication episodes. Eleven participants (47%) noted that their heart palpitates when they are nervous, and 26% reported that their hands either turn cold, sweat, or shake when they are nervous. About 26% chose to talk about being fearful in the classroom, some even to the extent that their mind goes blank and are unable to remember anything that they said during the time in question. Similarly, 21% admitted that they often regret saying something when they were nervous, and report that after the incident, they knew exactly what they should have said. Some even said that they remember and go over in their mind incidents that occurred many years ago. Notes one of the students:

> I get extremely apprehensive. It shows on my face, and my heart palpitates. I wonder how some people can talk and NOT feel apprehensive. When I see those people I really wonder how they do that! Even if I am asked to do something in class, for example translate something, even though I have prepared, I still can't relax just before I am called upon. I hate it.

Question 7 What techniques do you use to communicate?

The main theme was the desire to escape. Other answers focused on which techniques would be used with which interlocutor. Of all questions, Category 1 under Question 7 had the second highest number of responses. Sixteen respondents, or 69%, said that they made it a point to escape from any situation in which they will have to talk to a college teacher; however, they enjoy, and even initiate, a conversation with a friend. However, 56% noted that there is little difference between a familiar and unfamiliar interlocutor when it came to communication techniques. Almost one third said that they will use Keigo (an honorific form of expression, or terms of respect which are used in formal situations) to help create a barrier against communication. Politeness as a defensive communication technique was reported by 30% of the respondents. Others (26%) reported that they try to search for mutually acceptable topics about which to use. Take for example, this comment.

> If it is a friend, I will talk to them in a free and easy manner. But if they are unknown, I will mind my manners. Communication is not a device that I use. I do not talk to someone unless I have to. If I have to talk to a stranger, I would be hard pressed to find a topic to talk about.

Question 8 What kind of thoughts do you have about yourself when you are communicating?

The major themes in question eight were those of topic selection and fear of negative evaluation. Four participants (17%) think that because they cannot think of what to say next during a conversation, so they leave a bad impression. Others (8%) explained that they carefully monitor what they say when having a conversation. Take for example this comment.

> I feel that the other person holds a really bad impression of me, so I act reserved. And then it appears that I have not communicated what I want to say, I feel that the next time we meet they will think that I am such a person, and I fell disconnected, or short of breath, so in my mind I feel that I am out of breath. I am spinning in a daydream, and I do not remember what happened. When it is over, I feel okay, but later I wonder if what I was thinking was actually communicated.

Question 9 How do you think others perceive you when you are communicating?

Most students felt that they were not perceived well, unless it was someone with whom they were good friends. In particular, 52% offered remarks indicating that they are perceived positively by their friends. Less than half that many (21%) believed that they are perceived as boring or stupid, and four participants noted that such concerns are a non-issue if the person is someone they know. One participant summed the situation up as follows.

> It is almost as if they are watching over me. When I am with friends, I do not think they are not watching over me. And with teachers and strangers, when the conversation is over, they go back to being strangers. If it is someone whom I know just a little, I think I would be apprehensive because I do not have so many chances to talk to them.

Question 10 How do you feel when you are the object of attention and are evaluated?

Being the object of attention and being evaluated was of major concern to the participants. More than half of the participants (56%) discussed the fact that they were very concerned about being evaluated by others. A little more than a quarter of the participants discussed their dislike of being evaluated in the classroom, especially in front of other students during class. Eleven participants (47%) offered the remark that they do not mind being evaluated by friends, and three noted that they do not mind being evaluated if the evaluation is positive. From Category 10, the following was an example of the problems experienced when being evaluated.

> I do not want to be thought of badly by anyone, so when it concerns me, whether it is a familiar or an unknown, I worry about what they think of me. Even on the train, even if I will never meet the person who is sitting on the far side of the car, I will worry about being evaluated.

Question 11 What kind of communication happens in your family?

The themes which appeared in this category centered in three areas, (1) different than family members, (2) similar to a family member, and (3) no differences between family members. In general, almost one-third (30%) mentioned that their communication patterns are different from other family members in some respects. A full 21% of participants reported that other family members communicate the same way, and 21% also commented that other family members have different communication styles inside and outside the house. Slightly less than one-fifth (17%) remarked that they are similar to a family member, in specific, a sister. A common response in this area was as follows.

> I am the same as the other members in my family, personality-wise. But the basic difference is that I am not able to have a different home face and a different outside face. My family are comparatively able to do have separate outside and inside faces. I do not think having separate faces is a lot of fun.

Discussion

This discussion is divided into six sections, comparison with the results of the JCFS, comparison of these results with those obtained by Lederman (1983), impact on success of those with high levels of fear, implications for treatment limitations of this research, and suggestions for future research. The first main point concerns success of those with communication fear in Japan and the United States.

Comparison with the results of the JCFS

Because students chosen from the focus group were selected on the basis of their JCFS-40 scores, there should be a high level of agreement between the focus group results and the results obtained from prior research on the JCFS-40. Indeed, level of familiarity proved to be an important factor in the focus group results. Further, the status of the receiver, such as the sempai-dohai-kohai (senior-same-junior) relationship, was a major fear-inducing indicator. A high level of fear associated with teachers was also reported in the focus group, also a fear-inducing element on the JCFS-40. Family or home communication was not considered to be as strong a factor in the focus groups, which was also in line with expectations based on JCFS-40 data.

However, the participants of the focus groups did not discuss the number of receivers dimension, which was a major determinant of communication fear. Based on the results of these focus groups, there is evidence, through triangulation, to suggest the JCFS is indeed measuring fear of communication in the Japanese culture. All factors except one which comprise the JCFS surface in the comments of focus group participants.

Cross-Cultural Comparison

Lederman (1983) conducted focus group research in the U.S. asking fearful individuals about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. She found that talking is not a pleasurable activity, that high CAs talk when they have something to say, the less familiar the topic the greater the fear, and those who could talk easily were admired.

For an unknown other, talking is not a pleasurable activity for the Japanese focus group students, a result that parallels the research of Lederman. In contrast, participants in the

Japanese focus group reported that if the other is known, talking is not a burden but can be enjoyable. However, similar to the Lederman group, the focus group participants in the present study tend not talk if they do not have something to say. Also in line with the Lederman findings, the Japanese participants reported that unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge about the topic at hand were likely to induce apprehension.

In terms of feelings about not talking, U. S. participants noted that they enjoyed listening and classified themselves as listeners. The Japanese focus group reported the same point, some even noting that listening was their role in the conversation. Thus the results between the Japanese and the Americans in terms of not talking were strikingly similar.

As far as the relationship between feelings and behaviors, Lederman found that for her focus group "there was silence which grew out of anxiety; there was silence which grew out of confidence" (p. 236). The Japanese focus group definitely reported silence out of anxiety, sometimes even so much that they reported being debilitated. Yet, the word confidence did not appear once in the group when referring to themselves. Students did report that they could talk to someone who was familiar with no problem, but they did not report that they did so confidently. In fact, some students did report that even though they could talk to a friend, they were in need of a positive evaluation from their friends or their level of fear would rise.

In Japan, people often speak of confidence as an ability such as driving a car or cooking a favorite dish, but using the word confidence to describe a personality traitor social ability is rare. Unfortunately, the authors could find no empirical data to support the claim, although an informal focus group of college students agreed with the assertion.

In the final category, "difficulties associated with talking," Lederman noted that apprehension levels *depended* on situations, topics and people. Japanese students also reported, quite intensely, that fear is dependent on the interlocutor (senior or junior), whether they knew the topic or could choose an appropriate topic, and the situation and location under which the communication occurred. In this category too, it appears that the Japanese and American focus group participants were similar.

In summary, despite the myriad of cultural differences that have been reported as existing between Japan and the United States, in the area of communication fear, the focus group responses that were reported by Lederman (1983) could also be found in the Japanese responses. In other words, there maybe some similarities in those with communication fear which transcend culture. Yet to be determined is whether these are based on biology (Beatty & McCroskey, 1997) or because Japanese culture is changing in many respects, or more precisely, becoming more westernized, especially among "younger, more educated individuals" (Stephan, Stephan, Saito, & Barnett, 1998, p. 742). Recall here that students who participated in our focus group were enrolled in an extremely competetive college.

Implications for treatment

After categorizing and analyzing the results from the focus group participants, the impact of communication fear on the everyday lives of the Japanese participants has become more even more lucid. Interestingly, students who were interviewed with high fear in this focus group appear to live double lives, one as a success of the Japanese educational system and the other as one who fears communication. This "dual" life is possible in Japan because the Japanese educational system puts more weight on written examinations than on oral skills (Fujita, 1991), which allows students with elevated levels of communication fear to hide their fear under the cloak of academic excellence.

In the United States, students who fear communicating are often put at a distinct disadvantage because of the emphasis the American educational system puts on oral communication. Oral communication is one of the major ways to prove competence in any number of arenas. In the educational arena, the need for oral communication competence is suggested by the finding that students with high levels of communication fear have lower grades on average and are more likely to quit school than those with average or low levels of communication fear (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1992).

Thus while on one hand the Japanese with communication fear may achieve success academically, they struggle with their communication difficulties. We hypothesize that students with elevated levels of communication fear will be at more of a disadvantage because of the

growing trend in Japan to advance the importance of oral communication skills (Daigaku shingikai, 1998). Individuals with high levels of communication fear will increasingly be at a disadvantage unless treatment programs are available to help them cope with their apprehension. Here, two dominant themes emerged regarding the perceived causes of communication difficulties. In particular, many comments may be explained as a fear of negative evaluation (Leary & Kowalski, 1995), and deficiencies in key skill areas.

In the context of Japanese culture, FNE may hold explanatory power in terms of societal structure. Relationships in Japan are clearly defined in hierarchical terms centering on status of the receiver, sempai-dohai-kohai. Because status relations between members of a group, such as college students, are important, making a good impression and ensuring that relations continue smoothly are considered to be primary goals in Japanese communication. A negative evaluation either upon first meeting or during the relations can significantly hinder future relations. We theorize that because of the importance of the future relations, Japanese culture in general may be concerned with a negative evaluation.

Second, the lack of ability to develop appropriate topics was a major theme that appeared throughout several questions. Many students also reported that they experienced trouble in keeping conversations going. Interestingly, this often occurred in cases when the interlocutor was unfamiliar. Thus, we theorize that the participants of this study lack the skill of invention (Kelly, Phillips, & Keaten, 1995), and this lack of skill may be exacerbated by the (potential) relationship with the person to whom they are communicating.

Limitations

The two main limitations addressed here are those of external validity and of the content analysis. The college chosen for the focus group is one of the top three private universities in the country. Because the school is academically challenging, participant responses may not represent Japanese college students in general. Further, focus groups were consisted of 21 females and 2 males. The responses, therefore, might be representative of females who experience communication fear.

Next, the thematic analysis which was conducted on the data focus on the surface meanings. No attempt was made to examine the deep structures of the text or analyze the metaphors that were present in the text. Thus, the analysis of this data was limited by the ability of TextSmart to develop appropriate and meaningful categories. Again, because of the detail in which TextSmart developed the relevant categories and because the TextSmart categories matched closely the dimensions of the JCFS, the impact on the results may also be minimal.

Future Research

Because of the preponderance of comments that fit into cognitive and behavioral correlates of anxiety, it appears that any treatment program developed to help Japanese high in communication fear should have both a cognitive and behavioral component. More in-depth research on students using the following as guidelines is thus suggested: (1) Choose a focus group sample from a University that is not considered to be an elite school; (2) Use a sample which has been chosen using another instrument; (3) Stratify the sample to include a better gender balance. Further research needs to determine which of the myriad of treatment program or programs is best suited for the communication problems faced by Japanese students with elevated levels of communication fear.

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FocusGroupQuestionsandResultingTextSmartThemes

Question 1 *How do you feel when you are communicating?*	Question 2 *In what situations do you feel CAA?*	Question 3 *Are there topics which you find difficult to talk about?*	Question 4 *Have your feelings toward communication changed over time?*	Question 5 *How do you feel when you don't have to talk (in certain situations or places)?*	Question 6 *Does something negative happen to you as a result of your apprehension?*
THEME 1: No CAA, or able to relax if other(s) are known, High CAA if meeting for first time **KEY WORD(S):** Known, Relax, First Time, Join (91% / 21)	**THEME 1:** CAA if interlocutors are unknown, not if they are known, can also relax **KEY WORD(S):** Know, Familiar (34% / 8)	**THEME 1:** No; (I) enjoy listening **KEY WORD(S):** Listener (30% / 7)	**THEME 1:** Communication became difficult during junior high school **KEY WORD(S):** Junior high school (43% / 10)	**THEME 1:** Like and enjoy being a (good) listener **KEY WORD(S):** Listen (34% / 8)	**THEME 1:** Heart Palpitates **KEY WORD(S):** Heart, Palpitate (47% / 11)
THEME 2: Both (my) seniors and juniors are major causes of CAA **KEY WORD(S):** Kohai, Sempai, Friend (39% / 9)	**THEME 2:** High CAA if forced to talk; Comfortable among friends **KEY WORD(S):** Do not have, Friend (26% / 6)	**THEME 2:** No problems if with a friend **KEY WORD(S):** Friend (26% / 6)	**THEME 2:** Communication became difficult during high school **KEY WORD(S):** High school (39% / 9)	**THEME 2:** Enjoy it when circumstances allow me to remain quiet **KEY WORD(S):** Circumstance (17% / 4)	**THEME 2:** Hands turn cold, sweat, or shake **KEY WORD(S):** Often, Hands (26% / 6)
THEME 3: College teachers are a major source of CAA **KEY WORD(S):** Teacher (39% / 9)	**THEME 3:** Depends on the interlocutor **KEY WORD(S):** Circumstance (26% / 6)	**THEME 3:** Not if we share a mutual topic **KEY WORD(S):** Interesting (21% / 5)	**THEME 3:** No communication problems with friends **KEY WORD(S):** Friend (34% / 8)	**THEME 3:** Do not experience troubles continuing a conversation with friend **KEY WORD(S):** Friend (13% / 3)	**THEME 3:** High CAA when called upon in class **KEY WORD(S):** Class, Call (26% / 6)
THEME 4: CAA depends on the situation, place and circumstance **KEY WORD(S):** Circumstance (situation, place) (39% / 9)	**THEME 4:** Depends on place and situation **KEY WORD(S):** Place (17% / 4)	**THEME 4:** Silence (lack of topics) will cause CAA **KEY WORD(S):** Silent (17% / 4)	**THEME 4:** Communication became worse / was difficult during elementary school **KEY WORD(S):** Elementary school (34% / 8)	**THEME 4:** At ease when not speaking **KEY WORD(S):** Ease, need (13% / 3)	**THEME 4:** Often regret saying something when nervous **KEY WORD(S):** Violently, Such and such, Should (21% / 5)
	THEME 5: Silence is comfortable in any situation **KEY WORD(S):** Comfortable (17% / 4)		**THEME 5:** Communication patterns have not changes so much. **KEY WORD(S):** Basically, not changed (17% / 4)	**THEME 5:** Can't speak if I wanted to **KEY WORD(S):** Where, place (13% / 3)	**THEME 5:** Feel bad when the communication does not go well. **KEY WORD(S):** Bad (17% / 4)

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Question 7 What techniques do you use to communicate?	Question 8 What kind of thoughts do you have about yourself when communicating?	Question 9 How do you think others perceive you when you are communicating?	Question 10 How do you feel when you are the object of attention and are evaluated?	Question 11 What kind of communication happens in your family?
THEME 1: Escape from professors, initiate & enjoy talking w/ friends **KEY WORD(S):** Teacher, Friend (69% / 16)	**THEME 1:** Worry about what to say next **KEY WORD(S):** Next, Bad (17% / 4)	**THEME 1:** Perceived positively by friends **KEY WORD(S):** Friend (52% / 12)	**THEME 1:** Very concerned about being evaluated by others **KEY WORD(S):** Concerned (56% / 13)	**THEME 1:** Different from other family members in some respects **KEY WORD(S):** Different (30% / 7)
THEME 2: Little difference between familiar and unfamiliar **KEY WORD(S):** Smile, Familiar (56% / 13)	**THEME 2:** Worry if I will be disliked when I answer **KEY WORD(S):** Careful, Often (8% / 2)	**THEME 2:** Perceived as boring or stupid **KEY WORD(S):** Stupid, Not a problem (21% / 5)	**THEME 2:** Do not mind being evaluated by friends **KEY WORD(S):** Friend (47% / 11)	**THEME 2:** Whole family basically communicates the same way **KEY WORD(S):** Home (21% / 5)
THEME 3: Use Keigo to create a barrier to communication **KEY WORD(S):** Keigo (30% / 7)	**THEME 3:** Worry about the content of what I say **KEY WORD(S):** Teacher, Lately (8% / 2)	**THEME 3:** If they know (me), then it is a non-issue **KEY WORD(S):** Much, Know (17% / 4)	**THEME 3:** Dislike being evaluated while in the classroom **KEY WORD(S):** Class (26% / 6)	**THEME 3:** All communicate differently inside and outside the house **KEY WORD(S):** Outside, Inside (21% / 5)
THEME 4: Extremely polite with unknown interlocutor(s) **KEY WORD(S):** Unknown (30% / 7)	**THEME 4:** Pay attention to the interlocutor **KEY WORD(S):** Teacher, Lately (8% / 2)	**THEME 4:** Hope than friends will understand who I am **KEY WORD(S):** Understand (17% / 4)	**THEME 4:** Evaluation is acceptable if it is positive **KEY WORD(S):** Okay (26% / 6)	**THEME 4:** Similar to a family member (sister or whole family) **KEY WORD(S):** Similar (17% / 4)
THEME 5: Search for mutually acceptable topic(s) **KEY WORD(S):** Usually, Topic (26% / 6)				**THEME 5:** Communication is different inside and outside the house **KEY WORD(S):** Parents (17% / 4)
				THEME 6: Similar to my mother **KEY WORD(S):** Mother (13% / 3)

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